

2147

Diagram No 78-1

U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY.

T.C.Mendenhall, Superintendent.

*State:* VIRGINIA

## DESCRIPTIVE REPORT.

Hydrographical Sheets No. 2126d 2147

LOCALITY:

APPOMATTOX RIVER.

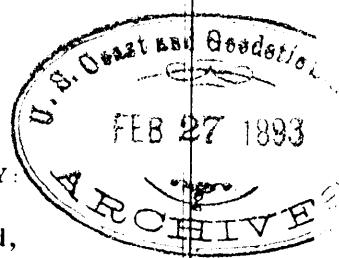
from

Petersburg to City Point,

1892

CHIEF OF PARTY:

Charles H. Boyd,



Write me at: .....

Telegraph me at: .....

My Express Office is: .....

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey,

February, 1893.

2-547

Dr. Thomas C. Mendenhall,  
Superintendent U. S. C & G. Survey  
Sir:

I have the honor to make the following descriptive report to accompany the Hydrographic sheets of the Appomattox River, Virginia. Dated December 1892.

The navigable portion of this river about 11 miles is between the City of Petersburg and its mouth at the James River. This is in a channel of about 8 feet, at mean low water, between two points largely separated though mud and gravel banks, and from time it may continue to hold this depth, is very uncertain, owing to large amount of silt brought by freshets from the upper river. For the first 6 miles below Petersburg the banks are almost entirely artificial. It is quite necessary for a stranger to take a pilot. There is little or no bearing away of the banks, which make

of these sheets, and I saw no indications of change of axis  
of stream, from natural causes. The U.S. Engineers  
have been dredging during the past fall, as shown  
upon the sketch supplementary to Sheet 2126 of June last.  
Some or less work of this kind seems to have frequently  
been done. It is reported, as the intention of the Engineers  
to make a 11 foot Channel at high water. It is also  
commonly reported, that a dam is soon to be built  
above the bridges at Petersburg, and above that a  
canal cut through the flat lands between Vicksburg  
and the Biglry heights, deflecting the river from its  
present Channel in front of the City, for some miles  
or more, and then re-entering existing Channel.  
The reason assigned, is to prevent deposit of silt in  
the Petersburg bar. Another experiment of doubtful  
utility. The small sailing vessels & steamboats  
that go up to Petersburg can find anchorage nearly  
anywhere. There is a dangerous rock in the Channel,  
just off the government wharf, at Petersburg - shown on  
the June sheet - which I have seen awash at  
extreme low stage of river. It is now buried. See  
no reason why it can not be rapidly removed.  
The most radical change since the Survey of 1852-3

is in the cutting off some 2 miles of the main river,  
by the so called "Storm dikes", the upper one about 2  
miles inland & extending <sup>on</sup> to the lower somewhat more than 4.  
and the substitution of the Puddledock Cut Thrufer.

The average width of this Canal is about 50 m. <sup>and</sup>  
it is intended to have 8 feet water at m.-l.-n.

During the fall there was a small river steamboat,  
running, hurriedly, from Anfall. - the only regular  
passenger & freight boat we saw on the river.

The Ichamus we saw was largely loaded with  
Lumber. and <sup>or</sup> Coal. There were 8 Buoy's strown on  
the Dec. about <sup>on</sup> 1 or that of Sams. no beacons or lights.  
I think pilots would be taken before entering the  
Affomatay, as the river is so narrow <sup>and</sup> crooked.  
Many of the sailing vessels were being towed. There  
was normally a tug at City Point wharf with steam  
etc. The river is so narrow at Petersburg that  
all vessels, we saw, had moored at the wharves.

Supply <sup>in</sup> Ships Chandlery stores are <sup>limited</sup> but could not  
find either a lead or log-line. Fresh water can  
be obtained from the City water works. The river water  
below the City should not be used as it is Contaminated  
by the City sewage, into chemicals from the

7

factories above the Bridges &c. Both Anthracite and  
Bituminous Coals are to be obtained - of good quality  
and delivered on the wharves or trams or taken directly  
from the Coal sheds. I think the nearest Seaport  
Harbors are at Richmond & Norfolk. Vessels are  
not usually retained here. An office of the ~~revenue~~  
~~Revenue~~ is on Tyndall near the corner of Washington St.  
The steamer of the Old Dominion Line - James River to  
New York - Pass the mouth of the river & stops at City Point.  
A railroad from Petersburg to City Point is the connection;  
also the small river steamboat mentioned before.

The Atlantic Coast Line railway from the South &  
the Norfolk & Western from East & West, have stations  
near the Government Wharf. The U.S. Custom House  
& Post Office are in the Government Building, corner  
of 2nd & Union Streets. The Flagstaff there is a  
transatlantic point. The river below Petersburg is  
seldom frozen to impede navigation; no river boats  
go up & down until its being closed by ice, but  
residents upon its banks tell me they had  
steamed from Petersburg to City Point at rare  
intervals.

There is no Compulsory Voltage, no water service

or printed Harbor regulations. There is, however, a Port Warden.

The following statement of Tonnage of the Port  
of Petersburg for the past year - Jan'y 1, 1892 to Jan'y 1, 1893.  
is sent to me by the Collector of the Port ~~as~~ is from the  
Port Warden buts. He writes, under date of Feb 20,  
in answer to a letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst. that the Warden's  
Office had then nearly 2 feet of water in it. so he could  
not reach his books to answer sooner.

Steamers & Tugs	581	with tonnage	37,229-
Schooners	82	"	7,665-
Sloops	14	"	184-
Barques	11	"	1,891-

Very respectfully yours.

D. W. Boyd

Assistant